

Conference of Western Attorneys General

Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard, Chair

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U.S., Mexican Attorneys General Expand Agreements to Combat Border Crime

(Phoenix, Ariz. – March 12, 2008) State Attorneys General from the United States and Mexico today announced “a new era of binational cooperation to fight organized crime in both countries.” A common thread in the agreements is eliminating the U.S.-Mexican border as a refuge for criminals on either side.

The agreements are the product of a three-day forum of the Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG) of the U.S. and Mexico’s National Conference of Attorneys General held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Phoenix. The Mexican delegation included Eduardo Medina Mora Icaza, Attorney General for the Republic of Mexico, who expressed his strong support for an increased bilateral cooperation.

“I am extremely encouraged by the joint commitment to share resources and work more closely together,” said Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard, who is the CWAG chair. “The progress we made this week builds on our efforts last fall at a conference in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and promises to significantly enhance our crime-fighting capabilities.”

“This binational meeting has allowed us to establish relationships with the principal objective of combining forces to fight criminals jointly,” said Jose Francisco Coronato Rodriguez, Attorney General of the State of Morelos, Mexico. “Today we agreed to make changes that will allow us to combat these criminals more effectively.”

The agreements call for increased cooperation and information-sharing among law enforcement authorities in the two countries in four primary areas:

- **Human Trafficking:** The Attorneys General agreed to systematize binational exchange of information related to organized smuggling networks, information provided by witnesses, operational modes, money transmitters, map routes and other information. They also agreed to work together to plan and execute enforcement operations.

- **Drug Trafficking:** Agreement was reached to develop pilot projects and other joint efforts to investigate drug trafficking on both sides of the border. They further agreed to prosecute drug traffickers caught with amounts under current U.S. federal thresholds in Mexico.
- **Money Laundering:** Agreements include using legal procedures and investigative techniques pioneered in Arizona to aid in the prosecution of human traffickers in Mexico. The Attorneys General of both countries also agreed to hold ongoing meetings to analyze selected money transmissions from the U.S. to Mexico and other evidence related to money laundering.
- **Arms Trafficking:** Agreements were reached to expand joint U.S.-Mexican undercover operations aimed at targeting illegal arms sales; advocate to close loopholes related to the regulation of U.S. gun shows; and pursue expansion of the registration of multiple gun sales of weapons such as AK-47s.

The Attorneys General also agreed to encourage U.S. states to establish databases similar to Arizona's THEFTAZ Web site, which provides timely information about stolen vehicles to law enforcement on both sides of the border.

Another significant accord involves the broadening of a legal provision in the Mexican criminal code to investigate and prosecute organized crime. The provision previously had been limited to criminal prosecutions but now will also be utilized in the conduct of joint investigations.

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